

STATEMENT OF DONALD W. MURPHY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS CONCERNING S. 748 AND H.R. 1084, IDENTICAL BILLS TO AUTHORIZE THE ESTABLISHMENT AT ANTIETAM NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD OF A MEMORIAL TO THE OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN OF THE FIFTH, SIXTH, AND NINTH NEW HAMPSHIRE VOLUNTEER INFANTRY REGIMENTS AND THE FIRST NEW HAMPSHIRE LIGHT ARTILLERY BATTERY WHO FOUGHT IN THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM ON SEPTEMBER 17, 1862.

November 15, 2005

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to present the Department of the Interior's views on S. 748 and H.R. 1084, identical bills to authorize the establishment at Antietam National Battlefield of a memorial to the officers and enlisted men of the Fifth, Sixth, and Ninth New Hampshire Volunteer Infantry Regiments and the First New Hampshire Light Artillery Battery who fought in the Battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862.

The Department opposes enactment of this legislation because of the potential impacts and permanent alterations that would be made to the historical landscape and hallowed grounds of Antietam Battlefield.

S. 748 and H.R. 1084 would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish a memorial within the boundary of the Antietam National Battlefield. The Secretary would select the persons to establish the memorial, and approve the size, design, and inscriptions of the memorial. An annual report would be prepared on the progress of the operations and fundraising efforts related to the establishment of the memorial. No Federal funds would be used to establish the

memorial. Upon completion of the memorial, the Secretary would assume the responsibility for its maintenance.

Established by an Act of Congress on August 30, 1890, this Civil War site marks the end of General Robert E. Lee's first invasion of the North in September 1862. Over 600 military units fought in the battle at Antietam that claimed more than 23,000 men who were killed, wounded, and/or missing in 12 hours of fighting on September 17. It also led to President Abraham Lincoln's issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. Antietam National Battlefield is one of 28 sites managed by the National Park Service (NPS) to preserve and interpret Civil War military history. Last year alone nearly 237,000 visitors came to participate in the unique historical perspective that this landscape offers. That number swelled to over 313,000 in 2002, the 140th anniversary of the Battle of Antietam.

Antietam National Battlefield is known as one of the most well-preserved Civil War battlefields in the United States. Veterans of the battle placed the majority of the 104 monuments on this site between 1890 and 1915. The monuments are in commemoration of their sacrifices and are typically located where the troops fought during the battle. There are regimental monuments, state monuments, and monuments to individuals. A mortuary cannon – an inverted cannon barrel in a block of stone – marks the location where each of the six generals fell who were either killed or mortally wounded. There is also a monument to war correspondents. These monuments are small in size and do not impact the historic landscape, which allows battlefield visitors to fully understand the soldiers' efforts on that day. New Hampshire is one of 17 states

that sent troops to Antietam. The New Hampshire troops fought at Burnside Bridge along with regiments from Pennsylvania and New York.

A moratorium has been in place since 1991 at the battlefield, which precludes the construction of new monuments or memorials. The need for a moratorium was identified as necessary during the development of the General Management Plan (GMP). The GMP is a long-term planning document that provides NPS managers with guidelines and objectives in the preservation of these historic grounds. The study of the battlefield, which culminated in this GMP, was undertaken with substantial input from the public and civil war historians nationwide. The findings concluded that the continued addition of memorials would result in an unacceptable permanent alteration of the historic landscape. The NPS conducts an active year-round program to educate visitors about the Battle of Antietam and to pay tribute to the valor and sacrifice of all those who shared in the pivotal history of this battle.

The role of the New Hampshire Volunteer Infantry and Light Artillery Battery is widely recognized in the annals of Civil War history. However, we believe the protection of the historic character of the battlefield, the purpose for which this land was set aside by Congress in 1890, requires us to seek other alternatives and better means to commemorate this contribution and that of nearly 500 military units which are not represented by the traditional sculptures and statuary today. We believe there are exciting and honorable opportunities open for the commemoration of these New Hampshire regiments without permanently altering the landscape, which we seek to protect in their honor. We have a duty to protect the history of all who fought in the Battle of Antietam.

The Battle of Antietam is the bloodiest one-day battle in American history. This battle site is indeed hallowed ground. We understand and appreciate the desires of the people of New Hampshire to erect a monument to honor their ancestors who fought here, but we feel that the preservation of the landscape, the ground where these men stood firm, fought, and died, is our utmost priority. We will continue to explore other ways to honor the New Hampshire volunteers and others who participated in the battle.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to comment. This concludes my prepared remarks and I will be happy to answer any questions you or other committee members might have.